

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 – 10: Cancelled

11. (New) A method for welding rails with heat-treated heads, comprising the following step:

providing a casting mold made of a refractory material and having two mold halves, wherein each mold half has at least one lateral vent and at least one sprue;

mounting the two mold halves around two end pieces of the rail that are to be connected, thereby forming a casting space;

inserting an alloy insert into the casting mold, wherein the alloy insert has a shape that enables to preheating of the end pieces of the rail;

preheating the mounting mold;

sealing the casting space with a sealing element made of refractory material covering the rail head;

introducing steel produced by a metallothermal process into the casting space through the sprues in the mold halves after passing over the sealing element, thereby filling the casting space, wherein said steel emerges into the casting space substantially at the rail head; and

contacting alloy inserts in solid and compact form arranged above the rail head in the casting space with part of the steel forming a weld in a region of the rail head.

12. (New) A device for welding rails with heat treaded heads, comprising:

a casting mold comprising two mold halves made from a refractory material each having at least one lateral vent, wherein said two mold halves, upon assembly around two rails

ends that are to be connected, define a casting space;

a sealing element covering the rail head and sealing the casting space;

alloy inserts in solid and compact form arranged above the rail head, wherein in both mold halves in an area of the casting space above the rail head, a bearing is provided, wherein an alloy insert with a shape making it possible to preheat end pieces of the rail can be placed on the bearing, and wherein in each mold half, at least one sprue is provided, wherein the at least one sprue opens in a region of the rail head into the casting space.

13. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the bearing is formed by a circumferential groove, such that the alloy insert can be inserted during the mold assembly.

14. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the bearing is formed by a circumferential step, such that the alloy insert can be inserted after the mold assembly.

15. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the casting space has a quadratic cross section at least in the area of the bearing, and wherein the alloy insert comprises at least one bar.

16. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the alloy insert comprises at least one quadrilateral element with a central opening.

17. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the casting space has a circular cross section at least in the area of the bearing, and wherein the alloy insert comprises at least one graduated ring.

18. (New) The device of claim 17, wherein the alloy insert comprises a circular ring.

19. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein each mold half has at least one bypass from the sprue to the lateral vent.

20. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein each mold half has at least one bypass from the sprue to the casting space in the region of foot flanks of the rails.